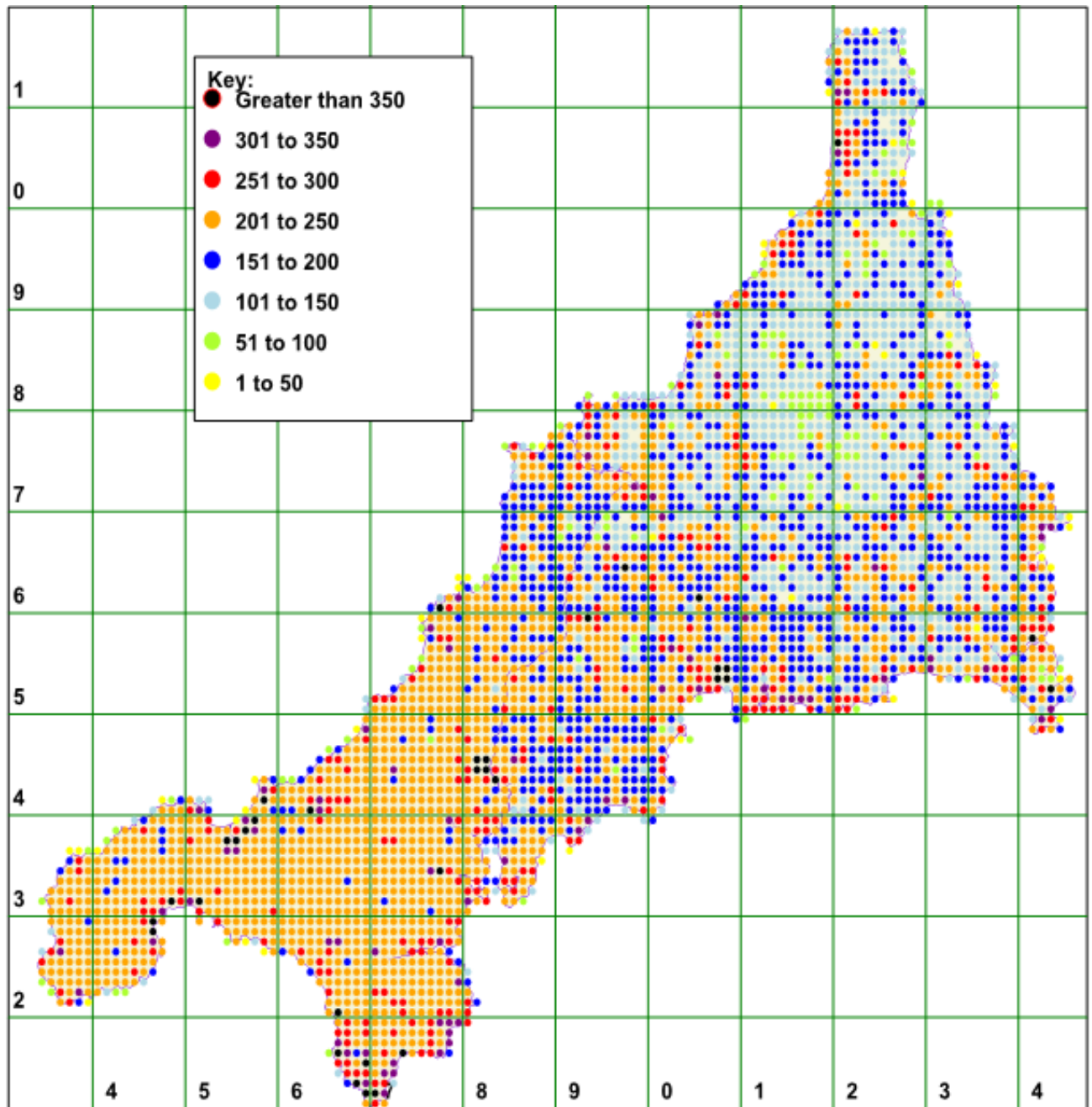




Number of species of flowering plants and ferns per 1km recorded since 1999 – up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017



Continued good progress was made in 2017 towards the ongoing monad survey which will result in the publication of the *New Flora of Cornwall* atlas. West Cornwall (VC1) is largely complete. 22 of the 3963 1km squares remain unvisited and of the 1909 1km squares that have less than 200 species recorded (see table below) it is estimated that 800-900 1km squares can be significantly improved. It should be noted that a large part of central VC2 consists of Bodmin Moor (circa 200 km<sup>2</sup>) where the maximum number of species per 1km square is close to 100 and many coastal squares only support low numbers of species.

No of species	Land	Coast
0	15	7
1-49	20	29
50-99	87	41
100-149	664	60
150-199	911	75
200-249	1381	181

The 1km squares with the greatest number of species recorded since 1999 are tabulated below. Par heads the list because it is port with a long history of alien introductions, is a built up area, and has a diverse range of habitats including salt marsh and sand dunes. Kynance, Caerthillian and Upton Towans have long been known as botanical hotspots and remain the most intensively botanised squares in Cornwall, so their high numbers are a reflection of the intensity of recording.

Grid Reference	Location	No of species	Built up
SX0753	Par	594	Yes
SX0853	Par	500	Yes
SW8244	Truro	423	Yes
SW5739	Upton Towans	420	No
SW5537	Hayle Harbour	411	Yes
SS2006	Bude	409	Yes
SW6813	Kynance	407	No
SW6912	Caerthillian	406	No
SW7760	West Pentire	401	No

In 2017 the Botanical Cornwall Group BCG (co-ordinated by Ian)

- held **50** field meetings – mostly East Cornwall vc2 (with average of 4 attending, but it varied from only 1 (Ian!) at one meeting to 28 people at the one held on the Lizard). Mostly regular attendees.
- made **1000s** of records (new records or updates to monads)
- surveyed **125** monads  
Resulting in
- Average increase of no of species per monad = **40%**
- Average number of species per monad before updating on BCG trips = **140**
- Average number of species per monad after updating on BCG trips = **235**

As we are aiming to publish a *New Flora of Cornwall* in 2020, the BCG is helping in targeting at least 600 monads in the next two years, the majority in East Cornwall, to get the total of species in each monad over 200 and the Bodmin Moor monads over 100. We are also searching out old records for rare and threatened species, as well as make a start on writing the accounts. The Flora introduction will include many interpretative maps. Though a section on Rare and threatened Vascular Plants was included in the second edition of the Cornwall Red Data Book published in 2009 (or online here - <http://www.cisfbr.org.uk/CRDB/StartCRDB.htm> - click on Terrestrial and freshwater section then click on Vascular Plants) that was nearly 10 years ago so an update - a Rare Plant Register is overdue! We hope to do a brief register in 2018 which will help in the preparation of the New Flora of Cornwall.

We also came top nationally in the 2017 New Year Plant Hunt finding 106 species in flower in Penzance and Newlyn on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

The following species were added to the Cornish list in 2017. They were not all found in 2017, for example the *Corynephorus canescens* (Grey Hair-grass) record came from an 1878 herbarium specimen for Launceston, which appears correct but location is highly unlikely for this plant and should really be left as unconfirmed. The find of the year was *Carex limosa* (Bog-sedge) on Bodmin Moor, given the nearest other colony is in Dorset. The hybrid new to science – between *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (Southern Marsh-orchid) and *Gymnadenia borealis* (Heath Fragrant-orchid) has been named by Richard Bateman as x *Dactylodenia lacerta* (after the place it was found – the Lizard). The publication of the BSBI Violet handbook has meant we are now recording *Viola odorata* var. *praecox* (Sweet Violet), which is the most common form in Cornwall.

Species	Common name	Family	Neophyte
<i>Abutilon theophrasti</i>	Velvetleaf	Malvaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Allium cernuum</i>	Nodding Onion	Liliaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Aralia elata</i>	Japanese Angelica-tree	Araliaceae	NEOPHYTE

Species	Common name	Family	Neophyte
<i>Arctotis aspera</i>	Shrubby African-daisy	Asteraceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Carex limosa</i>	Bog-sedge	Cyperaceae	NATIVE
<i>Corynephorus canescens</i>	Grey Hair-grass	Poaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	Russian Olive	Elaeagnaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Euclidium syriacum</i>	Syrian-mustard	Brassicaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Euphorbia griffithii</i>	Griffith's Spurge	Euphorbiaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Ludwigia grandiflora</i>	Uruguayan Hampshire-purslane	Onagraceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Muscari botryoides</i>	Compact Grape-hyacinth	Liliaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Narcissus cultivar, Division 6</i>	a Daffodil	Liliaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Paeonia officinalis</i>	Garden Peony	Paeoniaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Parrotia persica</i>	Persian Ironwood	Hamamelidaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Taraxacum cherwellense</i>	Cherwell Dandelion	Asteraceae	NATIVE
<i>Taraxacum laeticolor</i>	Pale-stalked Dandelion	Asteraceae	NATIVE
<i>Viburnum rhytidophyllum</i>	Wrinkled Viburnum	Caprifoliaceae	NEOPHYTE
<i>Viola odorata var. praecox</i>	Sweet Violet	Violaceae	NATIVE
<i>Viola riviniana`white variant`</i>	White Common Dog-violet	Violaceae	NATIVE

Both Ian and Colin have been heavily involved in the Cornish Biodiversity Network which provides a vast amount of information about Cornwall's natural history online, including the species accounts from the 1999 *Flora of Cornwall*. The website <http://www.cornishbiodiversitynetwork.org/> provides an easy way to generate simple species distribution maps and species lists for any 1km square in Cornwall.

### VC 1b (Isles of Scilly): Rosemary Parslow

2017 was the year when the New Flora for the Isles of Scilly was published! After the initial excitement we had to deal with the pre-publication offers and once that was done with the general sales to individuals and booksellers. A lot of the hard work fell on Ian Bennallick who had volunteered to do all the post and packing! I don't think we had envisaged what a big commitment this would be –neither of us being good at sales!

The publication of the Flora resulted in a number of new records and corrections from people who had seen the book. Eventually some of these will be published in BSBI News. One of the oddest new record was Peter Stroh's find of a flowering *Anthemis arvensis* (Corn Chamomile) growing on a cut willow stump in a reed bed.

Perhaps the most exciting record of the year was the discovery of just one plant of *Rumex rupestris* (Shore Dock) on the uninhabited island of Teán by Ian Bennallick and myself, after the apparent total loss of the species from Scilly after extreme storms in 2014. In late September we re-visited all the former *Rumex* sites we could get to and found no plants until we came across a healthy fruiting specimen at the former site on the island.

### **VC 3 (South Devon): Roger Smith**

The majority of new county and vice-county records this year, mostly in VC3, were dandelions *Taraxacum* thanks to the efforts of John Day and John Richards, the BSBI *Taraxacum* referee. Also in VC3 the hybrid Eyebright *Euphrasia arctica* × *E. nemorosa* (Arctic Eyebright x Common Eyebright) identified by Chris Metherell, the BSBI *Euphrasia* referee, amongst a collection of plants found by Pete Reay near Gidley Bridge, is new and some distance from the nearest known population of *E. arctica*. In addition to these, the introduced *Agapanthus praecox* (African Lily) was reported by Kevin Ryland at Kingsbridge and *Euphorbia maculata* (Spotted Spurge) at Crediton found by David Cann are new to VC3 and Devon and *Mentha requienii* (Corsican Mint) at Meshaw by Bob Hodgson is new to VC4.

There were several other significant finds of rare or under-recorded native species. In South Devon an old record of the very rare hybrid fern *Asplenium* × *jacksonii* (Jackson's Spleen-wort) recorded near Ashburton in the nineteenth century, published by Alston (1940), has just come to light and several important additions to our fern records were made by the British Pteridological Society during their September field meeting, most significantly new sites for the gametophyte stage of *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern). A single plant of *Physospermum cornubiense* (Bladderseed) found at its last known site on a verge at Blaxton by Mary Breeds, John Day and Hilary Marshall is the first record of a plant, once locally common in this part of the county, since 1987. *Crassula tillaea* (Mossy Stonecrop) has a long history at quarries in the Bickleigh Vale where a remnant population was last seen during a DAB meeting in 2008. A new population found by Kevin Ryland in the well-recorded buffer zone at Dawlish Warren must be a recent colonist, perhaps from Praa Sands in Cornwall. *Bupleurum rotundifolium* (Thorow-wax), a weed of arable fields but always rare in Devon, had more or less disappeared from the British flora by 1960. More recently we had one good record from Plymouth in 2006 and now two have come along together, at Dartington reported by Mike Ingram, and at Membury reported by David Allen. Last year Andy Byfield was fairly sure he had found *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet) so he and I revisited the site in late spring and found a number of plants flowering amongst a large but very local population on Plaster Down, the first record of this plant from South Devon since 1936. Several alien species have also been seen for the first time in many years in VC3: *Lathyrus hirsutus* (Hairy

Vetchling), *Lappula squarrosa* (Bur Forget-me-not), *Anaphalis margaritacea* (Pearly Everlasting) and the recent colonists, *Cardamine corymbosa* (New Zealand Bitter-cress) and *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort) show signs of expanding their range.

In North Devon *Carex* × *psuedoaxillaris* (False Fox-sedge × Remote Sedge) was identified at RAF Chivenor by Bob Hodgson and Mary Breeds during an outing with the North Devon Botany Group. It had been recorded on twelve occasions before 1939 but, although both parents are still relatively common, not since then. Bob Kirby's report of *Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush), from Northam Burrows is not far from its only other Devon stations on Lundy, where it was last seen in 1934, and Braunton Burrows where it was last seen in 1986 by Len Margetts and Bill Tucker. It is a plant of damp brackish habitats, may well be under-recorded, and should be looked for in suitable places.

I would like to thank everyone who sent me their records and to encourage all members to do the same. All records will add value to other publications at local and national levels. I would also like to thank the specialist referees for their time and interest.

#### **VC 4 (North Devon): Bob Hodgson, Jeremy Ison**

Atlas recording concentrated on monads in the Exmoor area, tetrads north of Crediton and in the South Molton area (Bob Hodgson), recording north of Okehampton (Jeremy Ison) and east of Bideford (Bob Kirby). The north Devon botany group continues to record regularly and we have had a number of DA botany section field meetings in the VC. Our plans for 2018 are to concentrate on under-recorded tetrads in the west of the vice county. A BSBI field meeting for recording is being held in the Hartland area in the far northwest, and other more local field meetings are planned. Jeremy Ison has joined as joint VCR this year which has been a great help.

Good Progress is being made with validation.

Significant new finds:

*Mentha requienii* (Corsican Mint) at Meshaw, new to VC.

*Carex* × *pseudoaxillaris* (*C. otrubae* × *remota*) (False Fox-sedge × Remote Sedge) found with both parents at Chivenor in 2008. It was not realised at the time but this is the first record for VC4 since 1939.

*Asparagus officinalis* (Garden Asparagus) at Instow. 1<sup>st</sup> record since 1939 and only 2<sup>nd</sup> in VC.

*Catapodium marinum* (Sea Fern-grass) found in two laybys on the A361 in 2016 and 2017, both well away from the coast and a new halophyte record from a heavily salted trunk road.

#### **VC 6 (North Somerset): Helena Crouch, Liz McDonnell**

In 2017, over 67,500 records were made in VC6, input to MapMate and sent to the BSBI (up from 52,000 in 2016). A number of active groups as well as many dedicated individuals contributed records: Somerset Rare Plants Group (SRPG), Somerset Botany Group (SBG), Cam Valley Wildlife Group (CVWG), Bath Natural History Society (BNHS) and Bristol Naturalists' Society (BNS). Thousands of records were made on field meetings:

- SRPG held 6 all-day field meetings in VC6 and participated in the BSBI NYPH
- SBG met every Tuesday morning from April to September, with 20 surveys in VC6
- CVWG went out recording every Wednesday evening for 23 weeks through the summer
- BNS held 3 botanical field meetings in VC6 and Helena Crouch led 2 for BNHS

SRPG held 3 indoor meetings early in 2017, the third being a Winter Twigs and Conifers Workshop which was very well attended. In August, Liz McDonnell and Steve Parker ran a very successful Docks & Knotweeds Workshop and in September Helena Crouch ran a Fern Workshop for Somerset Botany Group. In September, SRPG held a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, largely organised by Liz McDonnell and co-ordinated by Cath Shellswell, with talks by Peter Marren, Tim Rich, Andy Byfield, Tim Waters and 5 members of SRPG. This was a fantastic day, attended by 71 botanists from around the Southwest.

Three native taxa were found new to VC6 in 2017, all *Euphrasia* hybrids: *Euphrasia nemorosa* x *tetraquetra* (Common Eyebright x Western Eyebright), *E. nemorosa* x *pseudokernerii* (Common Eyebright x Chalk Eyebright) and (most excitingly) *Euphrasia arctica* x *pseudokernerii* (Arctic Eyebright x Chalk Eyebright) a previously unknown hybrid. A number of aliens were also recorded new to VC6: *Artemisia verlotiorum* (Chinese Mugwort), *Cornus sanguinea* subsp. *australis* (Dogwood), *Gnaphalium luteoalbum* (Jersey Cudweed), *Hedera algeriensis* (Algerian Ivy), *Jasminum nudiflorum* (Winter Jasmine), *Salvia hispanica* (Chia), possibly new to Britain and Ireland, and *Vinca difformis* (Intermediate Periwinkle).

Progress with the Rare Plant Register is steady but slow. The list of qualifying species on the SRPG website is kept up-to-date, 25% of the accounts have been written. It is hoped to make more progress in 2018. The RPR list and all written accounts can be seen on the SRPG website at: <http://www.somersetrareplantsgroup.org.uk>.

The Herbarium Team continues with the reorganisation of Taunton (TTN) herbarium. The team of five SRPG members meet once a week at the Somerset Heritage Centre. Following digitisation of all 8000+ sheets for Herbaria@Home, completed in January 2017, the team is currently rearranging the herbarium from Dandy to Stace 3 taxonomic order. A grant was received from Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society for archive-quality card and paper for new genus and species folders. The team have mounted all the 200+ specimens collected and determined during the BSBI/SRPG Dandelion Workshop (April 2016) and these are being incorporated into the existing herbarium. The old museum herbarium database is continually updated as work progresses.



## **VC 7 & 8 (North and South Wiltshire): Sharon Pilkington, Richard Aisbett**

With only two more recording seasons left, Wiltshire's Atlas 2020 recorders really pulled out the stops to cover parts of the county that had received little attention since 2000. All this effort generated a staggering 59,234 botanical records in the year – which must be a county record itself. Our local records centre also came up trumps, providing an additional batch of 40,000+ older records received via consultant's reports, online recording schemes and county wildlife site surveys.

At last, the gaps in recording coverage are getting much smaller and coverage of the county has increased greatly although N. Wiltshire still needs more effort – as ever.

Two recording meetings were held to specifically target under-worked parts of Wiltshire. In June we visited one of the most remote parts of the county, near Fosbury and Tidcombe on the Wiltshire/Hampshire border whilst in August several recording parties set out from Mere. Both meetings generated lots of records and much fun was had along the way. We've found that a positive side-effect of such meetings is that less experienced botanists gain improved identification and confidence in recording species which they can then take home and apply to their own recording activities.

Once recording for Atlas 2020 is complete in 2019 our ambition is to continue recording the county at a monad level to collect data for a new flora to eventually replace our current one (dated 1993).

## **VC 10 (Wight): Colin Pope**

We remain on target to achieving more or less full coverage by 2020.

As per usual, we have made a number of new, and new modern records for the vice county. These have all been non-native species apart from the first confirmation of *Atriplex longipes* (Long-stalked Orache). The hybrid with *A. prostrata* (Spear-leaved Orache) has been recorded on several occasions.

A particularly interesting batch of records has come from Paul Stanley's investigation of the flora of touring caravan sites. His first find was prickly fruited *Soliva pterosperma* (Jo-jo-weed) (new vc), which has subsequently turned up at most of the touring sites visited. *Crassula tillaea* (Mossy Stonecrop) and *Capsella rubella* (Pink Shepherd's-purse) have also proved to be widespread. Other, rarer finds have included locally strong colonies of *Spergularia bocconeii* (Greek Sea-spurrey); *Cotula australis* (Annual Buttonweed) (new vc); *Trifolium resupinatum* (Reversed Clover) (first modern vc); and *Trifolium tomentosum* (Woolly Clover) (first modern vc). Long distance dispersal of propagules by vehicles and camping equipment is resulting in some interesting finds, first noticed on touring sites in Belgium. It is likely that the experience from the Isle of Wight could be replicated in other touring sites elsewhere, particularly along the south coast of England.

## VC 11 (South Hampshire): Martin Rand

All hectads now have at least 20% of tetrads showing 80% of their species recorded since 2000. There are still 6 hectads out of 32 where we haven't yet got 40% of tetrads recorded to this level. 2018-2019 effort will concentrate on these, and on chasing up taxa with no recent records in a hectad.

A few hundred 2017 records remain to be captured shortly. A steady stream of incorrect records turns up on the DDb from various sources, usually not from me. They get dealt with as and when, but it feels a bit like painting the Forth Bridge!

No updates to the Hampshire Rare Plant Register in 2017 but some more may get done before the season gets going in 2018.

I'm planning an online Supplement to the 1996 *Flora of Hampshire*, to be worked on in earnest once Atlas 2020 is out of the way. The proposal is for a Wiki with contributions from a team of people (only that team gets editing rights). Anyone wanting a taster can look at: <http://www.hantsplants.org.uk/wiki/>. Lycopods and ferns have a complete set of accounts, the rest is still scaffolding.

Notable native plant finds have included a new New Forest site for *Equisetum x bowmanii* (Wood Horsetail x Great Horsetail), a new site for *Dianthus armeria* (Deptford Pink) in the Avon catchment and a huge population of *Lycopodiella inundata* (Marsh Clubmoss) in the same area. Aliens continue to flood in, and this year include *Galium murale* (Small Goosegrass), *Lemna turionifera* (Red Duckweed), two *Solivas* (Burweeds) and a confirmation of *Allium trifoliatum*.

## VC 12 (North Hampshire): Tony Mundell

Recording for Atlas 2020 has continued at an impressive level. In 2017 a total of 19,778 records were added for VC12 by various people, including my appointed 'Hectad Guardians', myself and others. That number is for the records entered on my MapMate database by mid-January 2018, so the final count may be over 20,000 if more records come in. I do manage to keep up to date with digitising records that I make myself or receive from others. We have exceeded 20,000 new VC12 records every year from 2000 onwards but I expect that to fall for the remaining two years as we concentrate more on trying to re-find former records of particular species rather than recording every plant seen.

I usually record with one or two others, targeting the least well-recorded tetrads. I made 52 such visits in 2017 and this is in addition to surveys done by other 'Hectad Guardians' or by other members of the Hampshire Flora Group. The Hampshire Flora Group (HFG) is part of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and it provides a splendid way for people with an interest in our local flora to meet up. We have our own Exhibition Meeting every December and during 2017 I led three walks for HFG members at botanically rich sites.

There were many special plants found in the year. New sites were found for *Allium oleraceum* (Field Garlic), *Berberis vulgaris* (Barberry), *Epilobium lanceolatum* (Spear-leaved Willowherb), *Fallopia dumetorum* (Copse-bindweed), *Nepeta cataria* (Cat-mint), *Pilularia globulifera* (Pillwort), *Rosa agrestis* (Small-leaved Sweet-briar), *Trifolium glomeratum* (Clustered Clover) and *Trifolium subterraneum* (Subterranean Clover). Surely the most remarkable discovery was a colony of *Ludwigia palustris* (Hampshire-purslane) at Woolmer Pond, new to VC12. Details about these can be found in the HFG newsletter called 'Flora News' at [www.hantsplants.org.uk](http://www.hantsplants.org.uk)

### **VC 13 & 14 (West and East Sussex): Matthew Berry**

The big botanical news from Sussex is the publication of The Flora of Sussex, which is to be launched at the Adastra Recorders Seminar at Haywards Heath on the 17<sup>th</sup> February. It will be very satisfying to see it in print at last and all those involved in its production hope it proves popular-whatever translates as a best seller for county floras!

This event has rather obscured the fact that Sussex is now a county without Recorders (I am an Assistant Recorder with no one to assist!) I will be meeting with Nick Sturt later this month and with the likely recruitment of a third party as an "IT person", we hope to continue to supply the BSBI with verified records in 2018. The validation of records sent straight to the Sussex BRC (bypassing the SBRS), or of suspect ones already in the system, will be put on hold for now, until a new Recorder/s is/are found.

The Churchyard Survey continued through 2017 and will continue into 2018. For details of aims, methodology and preliminary analysis of results see under 'Projects' on the SBRS Website.

There is only space enough here to mention the smallest selection of notable records from 2017. *Hieracium festinum* (Hairy-leaved Hawkweed) was confirmed new to Sussex at Weavers Down (VC 13). Other important Hawkweed records were for *H. virgultorum* (Long-leaved Hawkweed), *H. pollichiae* (Roffey's Hawkweed) and *H. rigens* (Rigid Hawkweed), all in VC 13. *Symphytum x norvicense* (Norfolk Comfrey) was found for the first time in Sussex at Elsted (VC 13). *Epilobium x aggregatum* (Broad-leaved Willowherb x Short-fruited Willowherb) was reported for the first time since 1994 at Heathfield (VC 14). *Vicia villosa* (Fodder Vetch) was recorded twice in VC 14, the first E. Sussex records since 1981.

### **VC 15 & 16 (East and West Kent): Geoffrey Kitchener & Sue Buckingham**

The Kent Botanical Recording Group (KBRG) was pleased to be featured as the first in the Spotlight on BSBI Local Groups, as 'One of the most vibrant local groups' and we hope to continue in that vein. The group's field meetings included sessions focussing on ferns; urban botanising; Wealden ponds; arable weeds; and glassworts. The arable weed meetings, which have become a regular part of our programmes, are conducted with the co-operation of Natural England and the farmers concerned. We have been given to understand that our

survey data are some of the most useful which Natural England has in connection with Kent agricultural stewardship schemes and leveraging the funds which support them.

Eighteen taxa new to vc15 and eleven new to vc 16 were recorded. Highlights included:

- *Eleocharis quinqueflora* (Few-flowered Spike-rush), believed extinct in the county for 140 years, was re-found at Ham Fen, where last recorded no later than the 1830s.
- *Euphrasia tetraquetra* (Western Eyebright), not recorded in the county since before 1981, was found still present on the Dover cliffs, where targeted by a KBRG meeting.
- *Sibthorpia europaea* (Cornish Moneywort) has been discovered new to Kent as a potential native in woodland near the Sussex border, which suggests an analogy with the few Sussex Wealden sites, although introduction cannot be ruled out at present.

Our rare plant register drafting has reached Part O; all parts are revised annually. The publication online of a reconstruction of some of Francis Rose's missing Flora of Kent has resulted in much of the original being discovered; it is being transcribed. Progress with county recording and all the latest discoveries are set out in Kent Botany 2017, [to go] on the Kent webpage, <https://bsbi.org/kent>.

### **VC 17 (Surrey): Ann Sankey**

Atlas coverage: there are 11 whole hectads in VC17 and 22 part hectads are varying sizes. All have to date an increased number of recorded taxa per hectad in comparison with the figures for Atlas 2000. The figures range from 113 for one of our tiniest hectads to 700+ for one of our whole hectads.

Monad recording: we have made excellent progress in recording sites within monads. There are now only 11 monads with no 2000+ records. These are edge monads with no public access. One is in the Thames! There are just 6 with less than 20. At the other end of the scale, about a third of our monads have well over 200 taxa.

Field meetings held: 15 formal field meetings were held, all with an emphasis on teaching and monad recording. There was also some informal meetings plus a number of individuals recording on their own.

Progress with digitisation and validation: databasing the remainder of our old individual taxon records has stalled for a variety of reasons. This will have to be resumed. Validation of records is confined to checking that records sent to BSBI are accurate.

### **VC 22 (Berkshire): Mick Crawley**

The best botanical moment of 2017 was the discovery that our rarest plant, the Mediterranean alien *Bituminaria bituminosa* had not gone extinct as believed, but was back

in its original location. It is not clear whether it had spent two years underground, invisible on a perennial rootstock, or whether it had come again from seed.



The most abundant newcomer is a patio-paving specialist, the dwarf prostrate *Euphorbia maculata* (Spotted Spurge). It is now locally dominant over large swathes of the brick paviers of the car park at Silwood Business Centre, rooted in the sand between the blocks. This is a species that I knew as an alien in towns in the eastern USA, long before I ever saw it in Britain. It will be interesting to see if it spreads a rapidly in London as did the grass *Polypogon viridis* (Water Bent), which grows in similar habitats.





All of the 1km squares in vc 22 have now been visited at least once for Atlas 2020 with 31,706 records added during 2017 (bringing the total to 332,043 post-2000 records for the vice county). Because of the unusually high level of recording effort, the 4 monads including Silwood Park (SU9369, 9368, 9469 and 9468) are the richest with 484, 567, 634 and 1,555 taxa respectively (most of them planted, of course). The complete monad (100ha) with the lowest total species richness is a square (SU3792) dominated by improved pasture in The Vale of the White Horse east of Stanford in the Vale, which has no roads and no buildings; this thoroughly recorded but exceptionally dull monad had just 29 species.



### **VC 23 (Oxfordshire): David Morris**

Another busy year. I organised ten or so field meetings, the first in April, the last for the New Year Plant Hunt, and a number were also organised by other locals. Almost all were Atlas recording meetings in poorly covered areas, but taking in sites of interest, including visits to meadows and a fen, and there was a meeting to train beginner recorders. There was a good mix of ages and abilities throughout.

The BSBI data holding for the vice county grew considerably in 2017 with around 350,000 vascular plant records from the local record centre in March, and over 15,000 were gathered by recorders during the course of the year. Needless to say, it is quite a task to validate all of this! I was pleased to welcome several new recorders in 2017, experienced botanists moving to the county and others taking it up for the first time, providing a much needed boost to record coverage.

The blog ([oxbot.blogspot.co.uk](http://oxbot.blogspot.co.uk)) continues to be active, mostly reporting on the meetings I organise. Notably, the rediscovery of *Potamogeton nodosus* (Loddon pondweed) in the vice county by Frank Hunt was blogged in September. I've also been working to get more content

on the blog, including systematic lists of all plants recorded from the county. Soon there'll be an update with progress with Atlas 2020, so stay tuned to see how we're doing in Oxfordshire.

## **VC 29 (Cambridgeshire): Alan Leslie, Jonathan Shanklin**

Atlas 2020 recording is nearly complete. Some historic records from a long gone habitat mean that one hectad still has a less than 70% refind rate. Two tetrads also require further visits, whilst two further tetrads have been visited, though the recorder has not yet sent the records in. Otherwise all tetrads have a >70% refind rate and 120 or more species in them. There will always be more records to add! We hope to refind some of the scarcer species over the next two years. We held seven field meetings in 2017, and 2018 looks set to have a larger number. A newsletter was circulated to all local BSBI members and to some non members in February.

Following a comment at the 2016 AEM I (AL) have started re-recording some of the more frequently visited "special sites" (eg LNR, SSSI, CWS) on a five year cycle, with more general sites and tetrads staying on the date class 10-year cycle.

Alan's card index records remain to be digitised, but most other post 2000 records are up to date. Some validation of scarce species and records that appear to be from over the county boundary has been done.

The RPR and Register of Plants of Conservation Concern (which includes additional scarce, less threatened or extinct species) have both been updated. Species accounts for a new Flora have been completed as have 15 accounts of significant areas or localities taken from throughout the county to highlight the diversity of the flora. Potential illustrations have been accumulated and work is now in hand to complete the remainder of the ancillary matter.

This year has seen a few unexpected records of native plants, most notably *Carex strigosa* (Thin-spiked Wood-sedge) on Chippenham Fen (the first definite record in the county since the late eighteenth century) and a good population in an entirely new site for a local rarity, *Carex oederi* (Small-fruited Yellow-sedge); the site for the latter also holding an extensive colony of *Typha minima*. *Bidens cernua* (Nodding Bur-marigold) was refound in an old locality, only our second recent record, whilst *Alopecurus aequalis* (Orange foxtail) was found in water meadows at Ely in an area where it was last noted in the nineteenth century. Plants accidentally imported with soil around new developments included *Trifolium ornithopodioides* (Bird's-foot Clover) (new to the county) and *Trifolium glomeratum* (Clustered Clover) (the second record). Other notable aliens have included *Allium paniculatum* (Pale Garlic), *Amaranthus blitoides* (Prostrate Pigweed), *Asarina procumbens* (Trailing Snapdragon), *Gnaphalium purpureum* (American Cudweed), *Guizotia scabra*, *Miscanthus sinensis* (Chinese Silver-grass) and self-sown *Salix matsudana* 'Tortuosa' (Dragon's Claw Willow). However, none were less expected than the scarlet-flowered morning glory *Ipomoea coccinea* and a large patch of *Leersia oryzoides* (Cut-grass), apparently an accidental introduction in a ditch in a new country park on the south side of Cambridge.



### **VC 30 (Bedfordshire): John Wakely**

The common species on the county checklist have been ticked for all VC30 hectads, enabling recording effort for the next two years to be focussed on the more unusual taxa. No more square bashing! Inventories of historical locations for plants not re-found since 2000 have been prepared for each hectad, and regular field meetings planned for 2018 for the small enthusiastic county Flora Group. It is hoped that by organising 'rare plant searches', other natural historians might be encouraged to get involved.

In 2017, cooperation with other natural history groups has allowed access to sites not normally visited, resulting in some exciting finds.

New VC records:

*Carex echinata* (Star Sedge)

*Tanacetum macrophyllum* (Rayed Tansy)

*Adiantum capillus-veneris* (Maidenhair Fern)

### **VC 33 (East Gloucestershire): Vacant**

The position of VCR for East Gloucestershire has been vacant for three years. Nonetheless, recording has continued with Clare and Mark Kitchen, John Rees and Clive Lovatt inputting between them a record 17,500 monad or better resolution records to the DDb for 2017 and over 5,000 for 2016. All have access to the BSBI "my county" pages of the DDb and have made use of the BSBI 'heat maps' to target under-recorded squares.

Through the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society and its Plant Group several field meetings were held in the vice county primarily for general recording. An illustrated annual report for VC33 and VC34 covering new and interesting finds and monitoring reports for rarer species, is written by Clare and Mark Kitchen and published in *The Gloucestershire Naturalist*. The 30-page report for 2016 includes records from almost 50 recorders. It includes reports of the following found in VC33 which are new to Gloucestershire: *Gentiana acaulis* (Koch's Gentian), known since 2013 naturalised on a hillside near Cheltenham (SO91); *Taraxacum hexhamense* (Hexham Dandelion); and *Vulpia ciliata* ssp *ambigua* (Bearded Fescue).

### **VC 34 (West Gloucestershire): Clive Lovatt**

A record 27,000 records have been input for the year representing a 50% increase over the previous year, with the previous VCR's Clare and Mark Kitchen continuing to record unabated, and the new VCR now retired from work. Three new MapMate users have been brought in, one of whom (John Rees) has been particularly active in the Stroud area, also entering some 5,000 records for 2016.

Field meetings have been held for the Bristol Naturalists' Society near Bristol but with few attending. Meetings, one or two a month for the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society were better attended and more workmanlike, for example, the Kitchen's two grasses ID meetings on the Stroud commons and in the Forest of Dean.

I was invited to record at Bristol Water's reservoirs (Clifton and Barrow Tanks in VC6, surveyed with one of the VC6 recorders) and in WWT's Slimbridge reserve, which yielded a high monad count and a new site for *Juncus compressus* (Round-fruited Rush).

*Alopecurus x plettkei* (Marsh Foxtail x Bulbous Foxtail) and *Pulmonaria rubra* (Red Lungwort) were found in VC34, new to Gloucestershire. Perhaps more exciting though was *Myosurus minimus* (Mousetail) round a water trough in an otherwise unremarkable field near Rockhampton, the first record in the northern half of the Bristol Flora area since 1796. Records and monitoring reports for VC33 and VC34 are published annually by the Kitchens in *The Gloucestershire Naturalist*.

In 2018 we expect to be checking up on some Gloucestershire rare plants that haven't been seen for a while.

### **VC 39 (Staffordshire): John Hawksford**

All records received have been entered into MapMate and, hence, the BSBI Distribution database. There were more than 17,280 of them.

13 individuals provided substantial lists; 3 shorter ones; and 16 a few records.

There are 49 hectads or part-hectads in the vice county. Minimum (75%) targets have been achieved for 43 of them; only one of the remainder has not reached this for its tetrad target; the others just fall short for the hectad target. Thus 2018 priorities are obvious.

The vast majority of validation has been completed for the priority categories: boundary matches, singleton anomalies, rarities and altitude ranges.

The Annual Plant Report & Revisions of the Rare Plant Register & Checklist have been prepared and posted on the BSBI website.

Plant identification and other queries received in e-mails and the post have all been answered in detail.

### **VC 40 (Shropshire): Sarah Wild & Alex Lockton**

Our Atlas coverage is pretty good due to our recent Flora (good timing!), and our data are pretty much up to date with digitising.

Our local Flora Group, the Shropshire Botanical Society, is very active, collecting data, and I had a first county record last year with *Fumaria bastardii* var *hibernica* (Tall Ramping-fumitory).

### **VC 53 (South Lincolnshire): Sarah Lambert, Malcolm Pool**

Recording for the 2020 Atlas continues apace. I've (SL) entered just under 21,000 records into MapMate, comprising 1062 taxa from 33 hectads, but I (SL) have also received over 50 spreadsheets of Fen Flora data (c. 15,000 records) and am expecting c. 11,000 records from Malcolm Pool and Richard O'Connor. I've received a first batch of historical data from Charlie Barnes, which also needs to be entered into MapMate. Even without this additional data, we've now achieved the minimum recording threshold in most hectads: only about ten well-recorded tetrads are needed for us to achieve our minimum target. So far, little progress has been made on validation.

The South Lincolnshire Flora Group (SLFG) continues to thrive, with 44 people on the mailing list and 31 members of the Facebook group. There have been seven field meetings between March and December, including visits to urban areas, acid grassland and wetland, woodlands and limestone grassland, as well as a winter social and planning meeting in February.

As BSBI recorder, I've got involved with the 'Love Lincolnshire Plants' project which aims to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century herbarium for the county, to be held jointly at the NHM and the Joseph Banks Centre. I've also floated the idea of a new 'Flora of Lincolnshire' with the LNU, and this will provide a continued focus for the SLFG after 2019.

37 new taxa have been recorded so far in 2017; most are garden escapes or sub-species. There have been several exciting re-finds, particularly a single *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid) in Skellingthorpe Old Wood, and the discovery of a new colony of *Equisetum sylvaticum* (Wood Horsetail) in Ingoldsby Wood, only the second site ever for VC53.

### **VC 55 (Leicestershire): Geoffrey Hall, Russell Parry**

#### **Atlas Recording**

By the end of December, 43,893 records in 379 tetrads had been added to the BSBI distribution database. Of the 53 volunteers who sent in records, three submitted 36,064 records. Casual recorders (less than 10 records) accounted for 21 of the 53. This is a tremendous effort by everyone involved, and vc55 is on the way to being well recorded by the end of December 2019. Significant gaps still exist in recording of aquatic plants, willows and poplars which we will try to address this year. The east of vc55 remains under-recorded, so GH has organised a 4-day national field meeting in July 2018 at Rutland Water to improve coverage.

In February, GH gave a talk to The Leicestershire and Rutland Recorders' Conference about progress in vc55 towards Atlas 2020, and organised a meeting about recording progress for volunteer recorders. GH & RP organised 8 field meetings for the local botany group to record monads suggested by the BSBI.

### **Digitisation and Validation**

GH & RP have received electronic copies of records of over 500 Local Wildlife Sites from the LRERC and are gradually adding these to the database.

Some validation has been done, and it is hoped to do this gradually over the next two years.

### **Other Initiatives**

It is intended that work towards a new Flora for vc55 will begin in earnest in 2020!

### **Significant Finds**

**Rare and Scarce Plants:** *Alopecurus aequalis* (Orange Foxtail) (1 new site) *Rumex pulcher* (Fiddle Dock) (re-find at 1 site), *Scrophularia umbrosa* (Green Figwort) (re-find at 2 sites), *Spergula arvensis* (Corn Spurrey) (4 new sites), *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain) (first record since 1920, but almost certainly introduced.)

**First County Records:** *Elytrigia juncea* × *E. repens* (Sand Couch × Common Couch) (= *E. × laxa*) (Rutland), *Vicia sepium* var. *ochroleuca* (Bush Vetch) (Holwell); *Artemisia maritima* (Sea Wormwood) (Quorn); *Beta vulgaris* ssp. *maritima* (Sea Beet) (Leicester City).

**Interesting Aliens:** *Pilosella caespitosa* (Yellow Fox-and-cubs) (FCR; Oadby), *Phalaris aquatica* (Bulbous Canary-grass) (FCR; Shangton), *Pilosella flagellaris* ssp. *flagellaris* (Spreading Mouse-ear-hawkweed) (third site), *Phalaris minor* (Lesser Canary-grass) (second site), *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* (A Sea Club-rush) (second site).

## **VC 56 (Nottinghamshire): Mark Woods, Dave Wood**

It has been the busiest year to date with regards to Atlas 2020 recording. 66,000 records have been uploaded to the database. Tetrad coverage is getting more even with a much greater coverage to the south and east of the River Trent and plans are in place to fill in the gaps in the north and the middle of the county.

The Atlas work has meant that training and field visits have been very limited and are unlikely to increase until 2020.

Another suite of interesting records this year including *Viola x contempta* (Wild Pansy × Field Pansy) (1<sup>st</sup> set of records for the VC); first records for *Cotoneaster boisianus* (Bois's Cotoneaster), *Crambe cordifolia* (Greater Sea-kale), *Eucalyptus viminalis* (Ribbon Gum), *Hieracium asperatum* (Rough Hawkweed), *Petrorhagia saxifraga* (Tunicflower), *Silene viscaria* (Sticky Catchfly), *Phormium cookianum* (Lesser New Zealand Flax), *Phyllostachys bambusoides*, *Phygelius capensis* (Cape Figwort), *Polystichum munitum* (Western Sword-

fern), *Oenothera perangusta* (An Evening-primrose), *Miscanthus sinensis* var. *Zebrinus* (Chinese Silver-grass); second records for *Alchemilla conjuncta* (Silver Lady's-mantle), *Festuca glauca* (A Fescue), *Berberis gagnepainii* (Gagnepain's Barberry), *Corydalis solida* (Bird-in-a-bush), *Lilium pyrenaicum* (Pyrenean Lily), *Oenothera biennis* x *cambrica* (Common Evening-primrose x Small-flowered Evening-primrose) and *Verbascum phoeniceum* (Purple Mullein). A new population of *Hypopitys monotropa* (Yellow Bird's-nest) has been found at Lound; all other populations have declined or are no longer extant.

An archive of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century records for Welbeck Estates has been found at Lincolnshire Museum, this has been digitised and submitted to the big database. Many new records are contained in the list and follow up surveys are planned to search for rare native species.

### **VC 57 (Derbyshire): Alan Willmot**

We held our usual annual programme of nine outdoor meetings in the county. We have made significant progress with recording for the new Atlas, out of the 42 hectads which are in or partly in Derbyshire we have 24 essentially completed (i.e. green) and no red ones left. Of the remaining 18 yellow hectads, 12 have a refind rate of 70% or better. All records collected for vc57 in 2017, some 50,000, have been computerised and passed on to the DDb which includes around 34,000 new records made in the year. I have even made a start with the validation of records.

Our recently published Flora still continues to sell and we have now reached sales of around 800 copies.

We recorded around 25 new species to the county most of which were escaped or thrown out garden plants such as *Cotinus coggygria* (Smoke-tree) and *Nerine sarniensis* (Guernsey Lily). However, there was at least one probably native plant *Epipactis dunensis* (Dune Helleborine), and others such as *Catapodium marinum* (Sea Fern-grass) and *Cuscuta campestris* (Yellow Dodder) which were probably spreading without the conscious intervention of people. Other notable discoveries during the year include a fourth recent record for *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) and a second record for *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (Maidenhair Fern). The find of the single plant of *Anacamptis morio* amongst a large limestone grassland population of *Orchis mascula* (Early-purple Orchid) suggests the *Anacamptis* might not be as rare as we think but just overlooked.

### **VC 59 & 60 (South and West Lancashire): David Earl**

2017 was a busy year and an estimated 40,000 vascular plant records have been received that included some 1375 vascular species. A significant proportion of these records will be from the third and final year of the Bio-diverse Society Project (run by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust).

Activities of the Lancashire Botany Group <https://bsbi.org/lancashire> included a winter twigs identification session at Cuerden Valley Park.

There was also monitoring of species such as *Carex ericetorum* (Rare Spring-sedge) about Silverdale, *Cirsium heterophyllum* (Melancholy Thistle) in the Cliviger Gorge, *Jasione montana* (Sheep's-bit) at Shirdley Hill and *Pyrola minor* (Common Wintergreen) on the dune system at Formby.

In Greater Manchester *Eleocharis acicularis* (Needle Spike-rush) was found at Pike Fold (a new site) by David Dutton and Debbie Wallace whilst David Bishop discovered *Ficus afghanistanica* (Afghan Fig) at Chorlton-cum-Hardy. There was also a trip to Silverdale with Tim Rich in search of scarce dandelion species.

Looking ahead 10km lists have been prepared to assist recording for Atlas 2020 and are available on request.

In addition a great deal of progress has been made with preparation of the South Lancashire Flora. Most of the sections have been supplied by the various contributors although there still remains a significant amount of updating of species accounts for the vascular plants.

## **VC 61 (South East Yorkshire): Richard Middleton, Peter J Cook**

Over the year 10349 vice-county records were added to the Mapmate database, derived from a mixture of targeted surveys and spot records. This is much in line with the last few years.

Our flourishing local group participated in a series of eight recording meetings to a mixture of locations designed to plug outstanding gaps in our general coverage or to look at places which have historically provided interesting finds. The season started well with records of *Nitella flexilis* (Smooth Stonewort) and *Equisetum x litorale* (Shore Horsetail) at Hagg Wood, near York, in April; progressed with a fine display of *Thelypteris palustris* (Marsh Fern) at Kelleythorpe marsh in June; was punctuated with a spectacular downpour in August; and ended in mid-October with a visit to the small coastal town of Hornsea which produced a creditable 240 taxa within a single monad.

There have been some interesting fern records over the year hinting that our historically impoverished pteridophyte flora may be improving. There were records for urban *Cyrtomium falcatum* (House Holly-fern) and *C. fortune* (Fortune's Holly-fern), and *Polypodium interjectum* (Intermediate Polypody) is becoming much more frequent. A meeting of local natural history societies at Fordon reported the continued flourishing of *Fumaria vaillantii* (Few-flowered Fumitory) and *F. parviflora* (Fine-leaved Fumitory). Among the more notable aliens reported was *Chenopodium ficifolium* (Fig-leaved Goosefoot), which appeared in quantity on a building site in Hull.

Our local web pages have continued to be popular and have served as a convenient way to disseminate information and share ideas. They have also elicited wider national, and even international, feedback.

## **VC 63 (South West Yorkshire): Kay McDowell, Louise Hill**

### **Kay McDowell's report**

Seven monads were surveyed in 2017. These are SD9451 (Broughton Hall, Skipton), SD9749, SD9649 (Bank Newton, nr Gargrave, Skipton), SD2303 (Sowerby), SD1906 (Beestones Wood, Ripponden), SE3012 (Horton Bank Country Park, Bradford) and SD5391 (Legaston Bank, Bank Newton, Gargrave).

I have organised two recording days with the Halifax Scientific Society in the Calderdale area. I'm planning two days recording with the Leeds Naturalist's in the Leeds area this season.

I'm meeting up with Louise Hill, my counterpart in South Yorkshire, to plan some field meetings with the South Yorkshire Botany Group to fill in the gaps in the Holme Moss and Saddleworth Moor area.

I've also been sent a list of Local Wildlife Sites by the North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre which are situated in North Yorkshire. I've been asked to survey a verge which is an LWS. I'm hoping the list of sites will indicate interesting areas to visit, even though we may not be able to access the LWS site.

### **Louise Hill's report**

Having received records for VC 63 from the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre, I highlighted a number of tetrads where we currently have no (!) records. Fieldwork by myself and a small group of fellow botanists including John Scott from Doncaster Naturalists' Society, Peter Kendall of Goole Naturalists' Society and Tim Kohler (Natural England) included early season visits to woodland and acid heath sites in disused quarries in the Eggborough to Snaith area, just south of the River Aire. A particularly notable find was a new site for *Carex muricata* subsp. *pairae* (Prickly Sedge) in an old sand quarry near Pollington.

Fieldwork was also assisted by outings of the South Yorkshire Botany Group to well-known Botanical hotspots, finding a new location for *Carex pulicaris* (Flea sedge) near Lindrick, an uncommon species this part of the VC.

I have also had a very busy summer of recording local wildlife sites in Doncaster (within VC63) and also in York (VC64) as a paid consultant for the respective Local Authorities. Notable finds include TWO more sites for *Carex muricata* subsp. *pairae* (Prickly Sedge), including one substantial colony in a disused sand quarry next to the M18 Motorway. This site also had an excellent tally of VC63 'red-data book' species.

I also helped some visiting botanists from Sweden undertake academic study into the British populations of *Betonica officinalis* (Betony). They were staying locally and only had a few days in the UK so we had to work out an itinerary of as many Yorkshire sites to visit as possible.

This coming season we plan to gather a small group of hardy botanists to take on the challenge of the other under-recorded part of the VC – Saddleworth Moors and Holme Moss.

### **VC 66 (Durham): John Durkin**

- This was a good year for recording, with 13,000 2017 records and many more earlier records input to the database. Special thanks are due to Keith Robson, who has set up on Mapmate and contributed many thousands of records with his first sync. Mark Dinning contributed many records from county wildlife sites, and Chris Lowe re-found many “missing” species in Teesdale. Mike Hunter searched out many orchid records for the county. Thanks are also due to Fal Sarker of the Darlington Field Club, who provides many records in every year.
- The Durham Wildlife Trust botany group, continues to thrive with visits to a number of DWT reserves and other sites. There are good attendances, 10-20, of interested beginners and more experienced botanists.

### **Atlas 2000**

Good progress was made this year. The tools on the BSBI website were invaluable in steering recording effort.

- Many site names/grid references were checked, revised, amended and standardised.
- 19 of the 42 county hectads were brought up to the "75% and 5 tetrads at 75%" standard.
- The uncompleted hectads now have an average of 71% re-recording and 3 tetrads at 75%.
- This is, however, not "on target" to complete the county by 2019. The difficult hectads are lowland ones with few interesting or accessible sites, and coastal part-hectads that have lost historically rich habitats.
- Targets for 2018 are 30 completed hectads (of 42) with uncompleted hectad averages of 73% and 3.5 tetrads re-recorded.

### **VC 67 (South Northumberland): John Richards, Quentin Groom**



Atlas recording continued with cards submitted for about 40 monads during the year (about 6000 records), concentrating on tetrads with few or zero records in areas such as the Otterburn military ranges with limited access. Recorders were encouraged to use Ddb to identify 'missing' species in target areas. Several meetings of the 'midweek botany group' were dedicated to 'square-bashing'. Historic records were also received from Kielder/Wark forests and the Haughton Castle Estate.

An innovation has been a vc 67 Electronic Newsletter of which three issues have been published (download from the Flora North-east website) (another is planned for April). Illustrated identification guides are provided to *Gymnadenia* (Fragrant Orchids), *Myosotis x bollandica* (Creeping Forget-me-not x Pale Forget-me-not), *Dryopteris cambrensis* (Narrow Male-fern) and *Atriplex* (Oraches) (our county boasts all the British taxa) and there are articles on roadside halophytes and *Crepis mollis* (Northern Hawk's-beard). A special search was made for the latter, and two new sites discovered. The county still has at least 10 sites for this gravely threatened species. Two sites, one apparently new, were also discovered for another of our 'specials', *Eleocharis mamillata* (Northern Spike-rush).

In this context, an updated version of the vice-county RPR was published in 2017 and is available from the Flora North-east website.

The most striking new record for the year has to be the northernmost UK site for *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (Southern Marsh-orchid), just north of Newcastle. We also recorded the fifth UK site for *Dipsacus x pseudosilvester* (Wild Teasel x Cut-leaved Teasel), *Salix caprea ssp. sphacelata* (Goat Willow) just south of the Border, and the first record for *Stachys arvensis* (Field Woundwort) for 150 years.

## **VC 68 (North Northumberland): Chris Metherell**

Atlas2020 recording is going well. We didn't quite get to an 85% re-record rate but very close. We're now targeting the rarer and scarce species which we've missed so far. Sometimes we can retrace the route of the previous VCR using his notes which is rather fun (and yields good records). Validation for Atlas2020 as per the Ddb page is almost complete, just a few loose ends to tie up. As we're planning to publish a new flora in 2023, we're having our first planning meeting this year to consider what extra work we need to do and how we should publish the results.

It was good to re-find *Arenaria balearica* (Mossy Sandwort) on Holy island after a gap of almost 20 years. More interestingly surveys specifically looking for *Erophila glabrescens* (Glabrous Whitlowgrass) and *Crataegus x macrocarpa* (Large-sepalled Hawthorn x Midland Hawthorn) resulted in many new records for both, which now seem much more common in the VC than was previously known.

## **VC 69/70 (Cumberland and Westmorland): Phill Brown, Mike Porter and Jeremy Roberts**

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With **Atlas 2020** dominating our approach, our chief aims have been to gather in and digitise records from earlier years and to record in areas of our two vice-counties (69 and 70) where there are obvious gaps. Additionally, using Andy Amphlett's excellent analysis spreadsheet, we were able to identify 171 tetrads in VC69/70 where one more visit would probably be enough to give 5 well recorded tetrads per hectad, so completing coverage for **Atlas 2020**. We aimed to get 57 of these done in 2017 but managed 97. We also put a lot of effort into recording in tetrads where there were fewer than 50 records post 2000.

During 2017 we organised one indoor meeting and seven field meetings in different, under-recorded parts of the county. All were well-attended and productive in terms of records but it was the work of individuals and small groups which produced the bulk of the records. We were also able to involve our **Facebook Cumbria Botany Group** (240 members, most of them not in the BSBI) in our field meetings and particularly in our **Snowdrop Count** and the **New Year Plant Hunt**. Much work was also done on validation of plant records for iRecord.

In all, we entered **139, 860** records, made up of 72,896 records from 2017 with the remainder (66,964 records) gleaned from earlier years.

Our best new record was the startling discovery of *Dryopteris affinis* subsp. *kerryensis* (previously known only in south-west Ireland) by Roger Golding, in Ennerdale.

## **VC 113 (Sark): Susan Synnott**

Ongoing recording for Atlas 2020 to places not often visited, even on this small island. Clearing of gorse from good heather areas had limited success, but will persevere. Permission granted by a new owner to maintain damp valley where *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath Spotted-orchid) grow. Main problem will be clearance of *Oenanthe crocata* (Hemlock Water-dropwort). A two day visit from Anne Haden (Jersey) helped me with some grasses. Visited Guernsey in August for their monthly outing to renew acquaintances and to learn some tips.

Some years ago 250,000 vines were planted in Sark, taking up very good agricultural land. They were never successful, so early in 2017 they were uprooted and just left to rot in the fields, including wire and timber posts. Later in the year visiting and recording what had grown in their place was rather interesting. Each field had a predominant plant taking over, in one area it was *Rumex obtusifolius* (Broad-leaved Dock), in another by the coast it was *Leucanthemum vulgare* (Oxeye Daisy), yet another it was *Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow), and yet in another huge swathes of *Fumaria muralis* (Common Rampion-fumitory), *Fallopia convolvulus* (Black-bindweed), and *Mercurialis annua* (Annual Mercury). This may be to do with the variety of vine chosen for the different areas, or the time of year when the vines were sprayed (some fields at different times to others). 2018 will be different again as some

areas are now totally cleared and sown with grass, and in the next few years a golf course might invade Sark landscape! Certainly the plant life is for ever changing.



*Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow) in ex-vineyard